

paper, but it gives us the opportunity to at least be informed of what's going on. In 1919, 1920, the Constitutional Convention, at that point in time, saw fit to eliminate the verbatim readings during the first two stages of debate primarily because it took a lot of time, because it wasn't a useful event for them, and they thought, well, we still have some of those problems out there. Photocopiers, obviously, had not come into existence, there was some carbon paper and so on, but it still provided that one last opportunity. As we went through then and the voters ratified that change to take away Final Reading, we moved into the thirties and forties, and at that point in time when a particularly long bill would come about they, they being the Legislature, decided, well, it wasn't a good use of our time, they just didn't do the reading, they skipped it, either it wasn't challenged, or they had an opinion or some agreement that the bill would still be fine. It was passed without a Final Reading and the Legislature, for particularly long bills, just didn't do it. As we move into the sixties and, of course, into the seventies, the opinion has come down that a verbatim reading was necessary to comply with the literal meaning of the constitution. And so as we have today, when every bill comes forward, there is a literal mumbling, and the Clerk, who does the best that he or she can do to comply with the constitution, reads it at an extremely fast rate, reads it verbatim, I assume, I hope. There are those that obviously try to follow along, but as a practical matter you and I both know that that just doesn't happen. And the other thing that I think is probably important is to look at both sides of, is there a benefit to Final Reading? Yes, there is a benefit to Final Reading, particularly for those who want that one last opportunity for some moment of reflection and to say, what am I really voting about? The trouble with that becomes you can have a one-page bill that makes a one or two-word change and affects millions of dollars in state taxes or state aid to schools, or can have a profound impact upon the way that this state does its business in a very short bill. And the 20 or 30 seconds that it takes to read that amount obviously doesn't afford you a meaningful opportunity if you haven't made your mind up already. The other one is, of course, that we've had the long bills that take six hours to read, that pass 45 to nothing, that during that six hour period of time I doubt if there is any meaningful reflection done upon that piece of legislation, and obviously there are many other things to do. This wouldn't be so bad, perhaps, if it was interspersed throughout the session. But you know as a practical matter that it occurs at the end of the